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South Africa: Prospects for Effective Black Protest

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An Intelligence Assessment

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*ALA 85-10004
January 1985*

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South Africa: Prospects for Effective Black Protest

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by Office
of African and Latin American Analysis. It was
coordinated with the Directorate of Operations.

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**South Africa:
Prospects for Effective
Black Protest** ☐

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 1 January 1985
was used in this report.*

Organized black protest groups in South Africa have grown in size and diversity, but the movement is hardly more effective than it was 30 years ago. Black protest reached its high point, at least in terms of affecting white concerns about the future, in the aftermath of the prolonged disturbances that began in the spontaneous eruptions in the black township of Soweto in 1976. We believe, in fact, that 1976 was pivotal for relations between whites and blacks in South Africa, and that the events of that year have led to fundamental changes both in the black protest movement and, more important, in the white response.

Large numbers of whites, perhaps a majority, were genuinely alarmed by the events of the late 1970s, and this alarm has had much to do with the emergence of the present reformist regime in Pretoria. President Botha's "adapt or die" rhetoric, which grew out of these events, has gradually been accepted by most white South Africans, creating a constituency for serious, albeit gradual, reform. At the same time, Botha and the constituency he leads are equally determined to use the full power of the state to ensure that pressure, domestic or foreign, will not significantly affect the regime's reform program or its timetable.

In our judgment, the regime's clear willingness to use its power to coerce constitutes the most serious obstacle to effective black protest. The size, prowess, and pervasiveness of the internal security apparatus make it difficult and risky for blacks to initiate and sustain large-scale antigovernment protests, even though blacks outnumber whites by five to one. We estimate that one in eight whites—that is, some 600,000 men and women—participates at least part-time in some aspect of South Africa's internal security or defense. In addition, blacks themselves are riven by the same fractious forces that prevent the formation of effective pressure group politics throughout the continent: tribal group dynamics, conflicts over goals, racism, ideology, and generational conflicts all work to thwart black South African efforts to confront white power in a unified, meaningful fashion. White politicians, moreover, have become adept at manipulating these divisive tendencies to keep black protest within containable channels.

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We believe that, within these restricted channels, black protest groups will continue to flourish, although their ability to force the pace of reform will be severely limited. Open challenges to public authority will always provoke sharp government responses, magnifying the lure of violent protest. And over the next five years, we expect violent eruptions will recur with greater frequency, if only because of the mounting frustrations of the growing black population, the refusal of whites to compromise their living standards, and the general limits on South Africa's economy to finance more rapid change.

Should black unrest spill over into white areas and result in significant numbers of casualties among white civilians—a development we judge possible but not likely—we believe the government would respond with a mix of tough security measures and relatively minor concessions. If the violence continued, Botha could ultimately be removed from power and his program of gradual racial reform abandoned. Under such circumstances, Botha probably would be replaced by a more rightwing government that would return to the harsh and repressive racial policies that characterized South Africa in the 1960s.

For the United States, violent black protest—organized or spontaneous—will mean greater pressures for divestment, the possibility of terrorist attacks on US interests in South Africa, and new complications for US relations elsewhere on the continent. Increased domestic unrest in South Africa could also threaten US diplomatic efforts in the region. Regional black leaders are already torn between their fear of South Africa, which is one of the motivations for their recent accommodationist policies, and revulsion of apartheid. They will be even more tentative about closer ties with Pretoria during periods of severe unrest in the republic.

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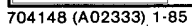
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Figure 1

Black Homelands and Civil Unrest



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South Africa: Prospects for Effective Black Protest

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Introduction

Since the National Party (NP) came to power in 1948 and began formally to establish apartheid, it has had to contend with antigovernment protests by organized black groups and periodic spontaneous violence in the townships. In general, the efforts of black protest groups have had little apparent impact on the government's domestic policy. However, the tumultuous unrest that began in the black township of Soweto in 1976 and quickly spread to other nonwhite areas of the country prompted, in our judgment, a fundamental shift in the attitudes of whites, including leaders of the ruling National Party. Many whites seemed aware for the first time of the tremendous pent-up anger and frustrations of the black majority. Upon becoming Prime Minister in 1978, P. W. Botha used the specter of black revolution to convince most whites of the necessity of gradual racial reform, packaging his ideas under the grim slogan "adapt or die."

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Recent violence has prompted observers of the South African scene to question again the stability of the white-ruled regime. In late 1984, some 170 blacks died during 10 weeks of sporadic antigovernment riots in South Africa, the worst period of unrest since the disturbances in 1976. This paper analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the organized black protest movement and discusses the likely impact of antiapartheid activities and spontaneous violence on government policy. It also discusses the causes behind upheavals like the recent one, and assesses the likely implications for the United States of black protest activities in South Africa.

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Obstacles to Organized Black Protest

The ability of South African black protest groups to coerce the government is extremely limited, primarily because of the massive and intricate internal security system that Pretoria has established to protect the privileged position of whites. Moreover, the black community is riven by deep tribal, ideological, and societal splits, some of which are intentionally fostered by government policy.

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The Power of the State

The size, effectiveness, and pervasiveness of the government's internal security apparatus make it difficult and risky for blacks to organize large-scale antigovernment protests in South Africa.¹ We estimate that one in eight whites—that is, about 600,000 men and women—participates at least part-time in some aspect of South Africa's internal security or defense.

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The South African Police (SAP), a nationwide paramilitary organization with approximately 47,000 members, according to public reports by the government, forms the backbone of the internal security apparatus. The SAP includes traditional uniformed and detective units as well as riot-control components and secret police, known as the South African Security Police (SASP). The SASP is a multiracial force of about 2,000 that works primarily against subversives within the country and has a vast network of informers in the black community. One of the main responsibilities of the SASP is to monitor and counter the activities of the African National Congress (ANC), the principal antiapartheid guerrilla group, in South Africa and the region. SASP methods vary from using sophisticated surveillance equipment to issuing blunt warnings to antigovernment groups.

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The South African military plays a key role in assisting the SAP in maintaining internal order. Military units provide vital support to large-scale police sweep operations and manhunts, and have backed up the SAP during major internal disturbances, including the most recent unrest (see inset).

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Besides the strength of the security forces, blacks and their protest groups also are vulnerable to a plethora of wide-ranging security laws:

- Individuals can be detained without trial.

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Government Countermeasures During Recent Unrest

The power of the government and the vulnerability of South African black protesters were underscored during the unrest last fall. In response to the initial outbreaks of antigovernment violence in September, police units sealed off the restive townships and used rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse crowds of rioters. Minister of Law and Order Le Grange subsequently challenged black protesters when he announced on 11 September that indoor political meetings in 21 magisterial districts at the center of the unrest had been banned for the remainder of the month. Only black local authorities, "valid" political parties, and trade unions in Johannesburg were allowed to meet. ☐

The government stated publicly in early October that it would not hesitate to use the Army to help police counter the continuing township unrest. In a massive predawn crackdown on 23 October, some 7,000 Army troops and policemen moved into Sebokeng, a black township south of Johannesburg with a population of about 150,000. Soldiers in combat gear lined the streets as police searched some 19,500 homes and arrested more than 350 blacks on various charges, according to press reports. Later that day, the units swept through the nearby towns of Sharpeville and Boipatong, where about 55,000 blacks reside. ☐

We believe Army troops were used, even though the police probably could have handled it, because the government wanted to impress upon black protestors that it was committed to ending the violence. The same message probably was intended for white consumption as the operation occurred two weeks after the widely publicized death of the first white victim of the riots and five weeks before important byelections for three white seats in Parliament. ☐

Security forces made thousands of arrests during the unrest and detained scores of activists. Following the two-day general strike last November, the government triggered a storm of international criticism by detaining 13 blacks who had helped organize the campaign. The heads of the two black labor federations, with a combined membership of almost 300,000, were among those arrested. The government in December released 25 black activists, including the two labor leaders, but brought charges of high treason against eight for their involvement in either the general strike or the earlier nonwhite election boycott campaign. ☐

- The government can outlaw particularly troublesome groups. It also can "ban" or "list" individuals.²
- Outdoor demonstrations and organizational meetings are prohibited.
- Protests that disrupt businesses for political purposes are illegal.
- The government can cut off external funding to any group that threatens the stability of the country. Many black groups in South Africa, especially the nascent unions, are dependent on foreign funding. ☐

² Banning is a form of internal banishment that varies in application, but a banned person usually may not meet with more than one person at a time or be quoted in the media and must live within a prescribed area and report regularly to the police. A listed person cannot be quoted in the media. ☐

The location and internal design of black townships also reflect the government's desire to facilitate the quelling of violent protests and to prevent them from threatening white areas. Most townships are purposefully separated from white residential and urban areas and accessible only by a few roads. By using roadblocks, security forces can quickly seal off a township. The patterns of roads and houses inside townships also are designed to meet security specifications. For example, one academic researcher reports that general guidelines followed by civil architects planning black townships near Durban in the late 1950s called for roads wide enough for a South African armored personnel carrier to make a U-turn and for houses built no closer than a specified distance so as not to impede police weapons fire and to make it more difficult for a fugitive to evade authorities. ☐

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Inkatha's Isolation

Inkatha, founded as a Zulu cultural group in 1928, was dormant until its revival in 1974. Inkatha bills itself as an antiapartheid national cultural movement seeking a multiracial national convention to determine the country's future. Inkatha enjoys a high level of organization and discipline, according to academic researchers. A Central Committee oversees regional branches in black townships in Natal and Transvaal Provinces, and in rural areas of KwaZulu. ☐

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Most black antigovernment groups have eschewed ties with Inkatha, despite its widespread popularity among South Africa's 6 million Zulus—the largest single ethnic group in the country. Inkatha claims a membership of some 1 million, virtually all Zulus. Press reports indicate many black activists and intellectuals believe that Inkatha's highly ethnic composition and cultural emphasis reinforce Pretoria's grand apartheid scheme, which seeks to preserve ethnic cultural distinctions, especially among different black tribal groups in South Africa. Inkatha's use of physical coercion and intimidation tactics against opponents also has contributed to its alienation, in our view. ☐

Inkatha President Gatsha Buthelezi has engaged in verbal firefights with a host of black and white South African leaders and groups in recent years:

- *Inkatha's relations with the ANC deteriorated following talks between Buthelezi and guerrilla leaders in London in 1979. Since then he has repeatedly accused the ANC of plotting to assassinate him, even though he is a former member of the group.*
- *Buthelezi referred to the UDF in a May 1984 speech before the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly as a "slimy steppingstone" established by the ANC to destroy Inkatha. UDF and Inkatha supporters are engaged in a battle for control of several black townships in the Durban area.*
- *Buthelezi has gained the government's ire for refusing to accept "independence" for KwaZulu and for trying in 1983 to persuade whites to reject the new Constitution.* ☐

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Buthelezi's increasingly moderate stance has won him growing praise from whites and hostility from black activists in South Africa. Buthelezi seems to have an iron grip on his Zulu supporters, however, and evidently enjoys being a maverick among South Africa's influential black leaders. Late last year, he gained widespread media attention in South Africa for condemning the school boycotts, the violence in black townships, and the general strike by black workers. ☐

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Black Disunity

Blacks in South Africa are a heterogeneous group and have not been able to unite to face the state's police and legal powers. Some deep, historical cleavages among them predate the Afrikaner-controlled government and, in our view, probably would persist even under a system of black majority rule. However, the National Party in the last 35 years clearly has taken actions designed in part to worsen the splits among blacks. This strategy attempts to reduce the likelihood that the rapidly urbanizing and expanding black population will evolve into a cohesive and formidable force for radical change. ☐

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***Tribal.** Although tribal divisions in South Africa often do not seem to play as important a role in preventing organized black action as they do in the*

rest of Africa, we believe that they have inhibited black South African protest activities, despite the unifying effect that white suppression has had on the black community. There are nine major black ethnic groups in South Africa that can be differentiated along linguistic, cultural, and historical lines. The government has designated 13 percent of South African territory for 10 linguistically based black homelands where a total of about 12 million blacks reside. The homelands are scattered throughout South Africa, which helps reinforce the cultural and linguistic differences among black tribal groups. ☐

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Some black tribal groups have long been hostile toward one another. For example, the Xhosa and Zulu

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Gatsha Buthelezi ... age 56 ... President of Inkatha ... Chief Minister of KwaZulu homeland ... a hereditary Zulu leader and adviser to Zulu monarch, King Goodwill.

activity, urban residency rights, and petty apartheid restrictions in the cities. ☐

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Even in the urban areas, living conditions in the townships make it difficult for black residents to develop a sense of community. According to academic researchers, some of South Africa's black townships are among the highest crime rate areas in the world. This discourages many blacks from leaving their homes after dark, according to the US Embassy. Moreover, urban blacks spend long hours working and commuting to their jobs, which cuts into the time available for community activities. The poor living conditions and overcrowding in the townships also promote fights among black ethnic groups at the bottom rungs of the economic and social ladders in South Africa as they compete for the meager resources available. ☐

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have been at odds since the 1800s when some Xhosa warriors aided the British in battles against the Zulu, and the aggressive expansion of the Zulu empire forced the Xhosa to flee from their traditional area. The historical rivalry increases the volatility of black townships like Lamontville that have large Xhosa and Zulu populations, and contributes to the enmity between the Xhosa-dominated ANC and the Zulu cultural-political organization, Inkatha. ☐

Ideological. Even when tribal and economic factors encourage black political activity, black South African protest groups are deeply divided on the question of the appropriate role of whites in the pursuit of racial reform, according to press reports. The "charterists" encourage white participation in antiapartheid activities and have formed multiracial organizations such as the ANC and the United Democratic Front (UDF), a large umbrella organization of protest groups (see inset).³ Members of black consciousness groups such as the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), on the other hand, mostly argue against permitting whites to join in the struggle for "black" (including Colored and Indian) political rights. ☐

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Subtribal disputes also are common in some areas. The most serious involve Zulu clans that have feuded for over a century. More than 200 Zulus died in internecine battles during the first eight months of last year, according to press reports. Inkatha leader Gatsha Buthelezi has repeatedly implored his fellow tribesmen to halt the killing. Even clans headed by Inkatha members have been known to battle each other, according to the US Embassy. ☐

The bitter rivalry between some charterist and black consciousness groups has overshadowed infrequent joint antigovernment efforts as the two sides often engage in vitriolic public attacks against one another. This is especially true of student groups; the US

Urban-Rural. Besides tribal-based disparities, there are pronounced differences among urban and rural South African blacks, especially in their levels of political awareness and activism, according to various polls. This is largely a result of the relatively inferior educational opportunities in rural areas, where about 60 percent of South African blacks, or more than 13 million, reside. Moreover, a major portion of blacks who reside in rural areas of the homelands engage in subsistence agriculture and are out of touch with some issues that concern urban blacks, such as union

³ The term "charterist" is derived from a political program adopted by the ANC in 1955, known as the Freedom Charter, that envisions the eventual establishment of a government in which all racial groups in South Africa are represented. ☐

⁴ Black consciousness first became popular in South Africa in the late 1960s when black student leaders began to preach black cultural pride. Almost all black consciousness groups formed in the 1960s and early 1970s were outlawed in 1977. AZAPO is the most important of the black consciousness groups that have been established since 1977, and is the key to the movement's survival. ☐

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The United Democratic Front at a Glance

Origins. Allan Boesak, a Colored theologian and president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, proposed at a meeting of an antigovernment Indian group in January 1983 that all organizations opposed to the new Constitution should form a coalition. Inspired by Boesak's call, a commission led by members of the Indian group set about mobilizing the coalition. The UDF officially was launched in Cape Town in August 1983. ☐

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Size. The UDF claims a membership of 645 groups representing more than 2 million individuals, about 90 percent blacks. We are unable to assess how many of these individuals are active supporters. The UDF began a drive in January 1984 to gain 1 million signatures on a petition condemning the new Constitution, but as of mid-October it had compiled only 400,000 (one-fifth of its claimed membership), according to press reports. ☐

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Structure and Leadership. The architects of the UDF, in our view, deliberately created a large number of leadership positions and a diffuse organizational structure in an attempt to protect it from government countermeasures. ☐

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☐ the most influential policy-makers are hidden in middle-level positions, and

^a Gumede is one of eight UDF officials charged with high treason last December. Sisulu is the wife of imprisoned ANC leader Walter Sisulu. Mpetha is a labor activist who in 1954 helped found the South African Congress of Trade Unions, which now operates in exile with the ANC. ☐

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many in the top echelon are inexperienced and expendable. The UDF has a decentralized federal structure. At the national level, an executive steering committee operates under the nominal leadership of three copresidents. The committee is made up of representatives from regional branches, each with multiple vice presidents, secretaries, and other officers made up of members from affiliate groups. ☐

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Orientation. The multiracial UDF has many charterist and several black consciousness affiliates. According to the US Embassy, some key policymakers in the UDF are committed, hardline ANC supporters. The three UDF regional presidents—Archie Gumede, Albertine Sisulu, and Oscar Mpetha ^a—are widely recognized as ANC sympathizers, if not secret members. We have no firm evidence, however, that the ANC controls the UDF. ☐

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Goals. Although the UDF does not have a constitution, affiliate members must support a declaration opposing apartheid, the new Constitution, and recently proposed legislation that would place even greater restrictions on the movement of blacks in South Africa. The declaration lists objectives for the group that include the establishment of a "united, democratic South Africa based on the will of the people," and an end to "economic and other forms of exploitation." ☐

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Embassy reports that the ideological battlelines seem to be drawn the sharpest between black youths, such as those in the charterist Azanian Students' Organization (AZASO) and the black consciousness group, the Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM). The ideological debate has even split the internal ranks of some black groups. For example, members of the ANC broke away in the late 1950s and formed the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) because of their opposition to the influential role of whites working with the ANC, according to press reports. ☐

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Ideological disputes are very strong over the extent to which blacks should cooperate with the government, according to the US Embassy. Black groups and individuals that work within the government's system are considered to be traitors by many nonwhites. The US Embassy reported in October 1984 that the black community is becoming increasingly polarized as "noncollaborationists" have publicly berated blacks who "sell out" to the government. The scores of

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Campaign Against the New Constitution

25X1 The government's controversial new Constitution, which grants limited political rights to Coloreds and Indians but excludes the black majority, has been the target of most South African opposition groups in the last two years. The black protest movement, however, was unable to put aside its internal differences and work as a cohesive force to block the implementation of the Constitution, even though the vast majority of blacks in South Africa opposed it. A poll by an Afrikaner university in 1983 showed that blacks were more angry at the prospect of a white-Colored-Indian government than at the thought of continued rule by whites only. ☐

25X1 Nonwhite opposition to the new Constitution prompted the formation of the United Democratic Front, which we believe has developed rapidly into the largest and most influential internal black political group. During the UDF's first national congress in 1983, it held a public rally to protest the new Constitution that was attended by some 10,000 people, making it the largest demonstration of its kind since the 1950s, according to press reports. ☐

25X1 We believe the much-publicized UDF was viewed initially by many observers as a force that would unify the severely fragmented black protest movement, but the group subsequently became only one of many disparate forces competing for the support of nonwhites. A rival umbrella organization, the National Forum Conference, representing hundreds of mostly black consciousness groups, was formed in June 1983 to initiate a separate campaign. Moreover, the UDF decided in September 1983 that any group that participates in any government institution or process is ineligible for membership in the UDF. The decision barred Inkatha from joining the UDF because Buthelezi, the head of Inkatha, is also Chief Minister of the KwaZulu homeland. ☐

25X1 The UDF launched a massive house-to-house campaign in late 1983 to mobilize support for a boycott of the Indian and Colored elections in August 1984 for the new tricameral Parliament. During the months

preceding the elections, a number of black labor groups conducted separate boycott campaigns:

- The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) used its May 1983 newsletter to attack the new Constitution. FOSATU also distributed thousands of pamphlets to its Colored and Indian members that urged them not to vote, according to the US Embassy.
- In early August 1984, 13 diverse black unions with a total membership of more than 100,000 formed the Joint Union Committee that publicly condemned the new Constitution and organized boycott rallies in black townships near Johannesburg and Pretoria. ☐

Low-level terrorism and nonwhite student activism also increased as the nonwhite elections drew near. The ANC conducted five bombings against government facilities in August before and during the nonwhite elections. A new group calling itself the South African Suicide Squad, probably made up of young blacks unconnected with the major guerrilla groups based outside of South Africa, also claimed credit for gasoline bomb attacks against the homes of five Colored and Indian candidates for Parliament in late July. During the Colored and Indian elections, more than 1 million nonwhite students at some 50 universities and schools in South Africa boycotted classes and conducted demonstrations to protest the new Constitution, according to press reports. ☐

The election boycott campaign undoubtedly influenced many among the more than 80 percent of eligible Colored and Indian voters who stayed away from the polls, but we believe other factors were more important. Apathy and cynicism among Indians and Coloreds, combined with their fear of angering the black majority by participating in the government's exclusionary system, were the most influential factors. In addition, the arrest of more than 30 leaders of antiapartheid groups on the eve of the Colored elections probably convinced many not to vote. ☐

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The General Strike as a Weapon of Blacks

Black groups have called for some 20 work boycotts in the last three decades to protest government policy. Most of these efforts were poorly organized and drew little support because blacks generally have been unwilling to risk their jobs for political objectives. The work boycott can be a double-edged sword in South Africa, primarily because employers usually can find jobless blacks who are eager to replace participants in a general strike. An urban black who joins a boycott and loses his job to one of the many unemployed blacks may face the threat of being relocated in an impoverished homeland.

The Transvaal Regional Stayaway Committee, formed last October, organized a general strike of black workers employed in Transvaal Province on 5 and 6 November. The Committee chairman was the leading UDF official in Soweto, and UDF affiliates spearheaded the campaign, but the UDF leadership chose only to publicly endorse the project rather than advertise it as a UDF venture. Two large black unions and the two black labor federations, representing a combined total of more than 400,000 black workers, also helped organize the strike.

The November general strike probably was one of the most successful ever in South Africa in terms of the number of black workers who participated. Press estimates on the number varied between 300,000 and 500,000; the US Embassy reports that as many as 70 percent of the black work force in Transvaal Province

may have participated. The participation rates were highest among union members and residents of the townships hit hardest by the previous months of rioting.

Many blacks, however, were unwilling participants in the strike. One journalist who talked with blacks in the area estimates that as many as two-thirds of those who stayed home did so to escape being injured by boycotters or because they were unable to find transportation to their places of work. At least 23 blacks died in clashes between police and boycotters and in attacks by boycotters on fellow residents trying to commute to work. Some bus companies halted service to several townships after crowds of blacks stoned buses and their passengers on the first morning of the strike.

UDF affiliates and the most influential black labor groups set an important precedent by working together on the strike campaign, and many apartheid critics hailed the strike as an impressive show of strength by its organizers and participants. However, the costs were high: about 13 labor leaders and activists who had helped to organize the strike were arrested, and the government-owned synthetic fuel company (SASOL) fired 90 percent of its black workers—some 5,500—for joining the boycott. The government also ignored the long list of political and economic demands that had been compiled by the strike organizers.

terrorist attacks in the last two years against black, Indian, and Colored politicians is evidence of this trend, in our view. Moreover, the black consciousness National Forum decided at a meeting in Cape Town in December 1984 to launch an "isolate the traitors" campaign to undermine the authority of local black councilors. A National Forum official told the US Embassy that attacking whites requires courage, while focusing on black councilors is much easier because they provide an "immediate target of rage."

***Labor.** Even the black labor unions—believed by many observers to be potentially the most effective source of black protest activity—have been plagued by a host of divisive issues, some of which are unique to labor.⁵ The US Embassy reports that differences*

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25X1 over ideology and tactics, along with frequent rivalries among union leaders and inadequate communication between individual unions and federations, sap the strength of the black labor movement even though its membership is expanding rapidly.

25X1 Tensions between charterist and black-consciousness-oriented unions are threatening three-year-old "unity talks" aimed at establishing a new federation of black trade unions, according to press reports. Representatives from the two black labor federations, the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA)—representing about 24 individual unions and a total membership of almost 300,000 workers—and four independent black unions held talks in March 1984 and announced the completion of a draft constitution for an umbrella federation in June.

25X1 CUSA, however, which traditionally has been associated with the black consciousness movement, has been riven by dissension since its leadership began leaning toward a proposed merger with FOSATU, which is controlled by whites, according to the US Embassy. Several CUSA affiliates have expressed strong misgivings about a superfederation because it probably would be led in part by whites now in FOSATU, according to the US Embassy. However, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which composes more than half of CUSA's total membership, walked out of the annual CUSA conference in late October 1984 to protest publicly the resistance of other CUSA affiliates to the superfederation. Even if the FOSATU-CUSA merger occurs this year, we believe that major elements of the black labor movement are likely to remain unattached to it. Seven black consciousness unions, claiming a combined membership of about 75,000, formed a loose alliance in May 1984 that may evolve into a formal federation which will remain outside of any FOSATU-CUSA merger, according to press reports.

The black labor movement is further split between groups that have registered with the government and those that have not. Groups that want to participate in the government's system for settling labor disputes are required by law to register. Many have not registered because they doubt the fairness of the government's system or are unwilling to work within

any government structure, according to press reports. These groups prefer to work directly with their employers without government mediation. Many of the black unions, even registered ones, that have been formed since the labor reforms in 1979 favor scrapping the registration requirement.

Generational. In addition to these factors, age differences are an important disincentive to black unity in South Africa. The generation gap is extremely wide in South Africa's black townships, which academic researchers attribute in part to the long hours that black parents spend working and commuting. Households in which the father and mother both hold full-time jobs are common, according to the US Embassy, and many black parents admit that they cannot control their children, especially those out of school and unemployed. In addition, polling results indicate that many young blacks believe their parents are politically unaware and are weak for accepting the indignities of apartheid without offering resistance.

The gap between black parents and their children was dramatically evident during student unrest last year. Researchers claim that South African black parents, many of whom have had little or no formal education, view schooling as an important privilege, while black youths believe they have a right to receive an education equal in quality to white schooling. The discrepancy between these two positions surfaced during school boycotts near Pretoria and in the eastern Cape Province last year. Parents, church, and community leaders held public meetings to urge black students to reject their leaders and return to the classrooms, according to press reports. The majority of students refused to end the boycotts, even after the government agreed to set up student representative councils.

Government Tactics

The government's tactics effectively bring together the power of the state and black disunity to discourage organized black opposition. At its most fundamental level, apartheid is intended in part to prevent assimilation among South Africa's black ethnic groups, a process that would lead to a more unified black opposition. About 10 million blacks are officially authorized to live in townships in "white" areas,

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South Africa's Population by Race, 1984 and 2000

	1984		2000 (Projected)	
	Population (millions)	Percent of Population	Population (millions)	Percent of Population
Total	31.09	100.0	44.90	100.0
Blacks	22.70	73.0	34.50	76.9
Whites	4.75	15.3	5.80	12.9
Coloreds	2.77	8.9	3.50	7.8
Indians	0.87	2.8	1.10	2.4

Sources: US Census Bureau and South African Government figures.

[REDACTED]

but they face the constant threat of being forced without notice to resettle in an impoverished tribal homeland. [REDACTED]

Even as the government moves toward restructuring black political systems in the townships and homelands, it already has publicly indicated that blacks will continue to be categorized by tribe and area of residence for official purposes. Pretoria is considering incorporating the homelands in a confederal system and establishing separate political structures for blacks who reside in urban "white" areas, according to press and Embassy reports. The government plans to devote massive funds to new housing and infrastructure in homelands to entice the majority of the expected 10 to 15 million blacks who will move to the city during the next 15 years to settle in the homelands rather than in "white" areas, according to press reports. [REDACTED]

The government, working primarily through the security forces, has strived for decades to sow divisions in and among black protest groups, as well as in the larger black community. At times, Pretoria has even helped one black activist faction at the expense of another. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The government also uses its influence over the South African media to highlight disagreements and foster longstanding feuds among members and leading groups in the black community. For example, the South African media gave extensive attention to those influential blacks who criticized last year's mass antigovernment protests and violence by fellow blacks. [REDACTED]

The government uses similar "divide and rule" tactics to keep black squatters living in makeshift shelters near white areas from offering unified resistance to continuing official efforts to eradicate the sites. In recent years, permits have been issued to some but not all squatters, which has promoted clashes between "legal" and "illegal" shantytown residents. Moreover, the Minister of Cooperation and Development announced in July 1984 that he had halted the demolition of black shantytowns in the large Crossroads squatter complex near Cape Town, but only on the condition that the squatters would allow no more newcomers into the area. [REDACTED]

Spontaneous Violence

Given the formidable obstacles to unified black action, we believe the Botha government is confident it can deal effectively with organized black protests. The government probably is concerned, however, that unorganized sporadic antigovernment violence in the black townships might someday spiral out of control. Organized black protest groups usually have been unable to channel the spontaneous outbreaks in the black townships into organized protest efforts, and they remain at the periphery of episodic violence in South Africa. Rather than fomenting much of the recent violence as the government contends, some leading black protest groups actually tried to end the disturbances, which they publicly described as counterproductive and costly in terms of casualties. [REDACTED]

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Triggering Events

Unorganized violent outbursts by residents of black townships are usually sparked, in our judgment, by specific grievances, especially increases in rents, bus fares, or bread prices that cut into tight family budgets. Large numbers of blacks are dissatisfied with the quality of their houses and township services, according to various polls. A study by academic researchers in 1982 concluded that rents in the black townships exceed the means of the large majority of tenants. In eight sample areas surveyed, 40 percent of household heads were paying at least half of their income in rent.

In the nine months leading up to the outbreak of the violence last year, black households were hit with an array of price increases on rents and basic purchases such as staple foods and transportation fares, according to the US Embassy:

- The average black factory worker who resides in the township of Tumahole in the Orange Free State Province earns about \$150 a month, according to a recent press survey. The rent and service charge increases that sparked four days of riots there in July 1984 amounted to \$8 a month for most residents.
- The rent hike in the townships south of Johannesburg that prompted the most severe riots last year involved an increase of \$3 a month (from about \$26 to \$29), according to press reports. Before the increase, residents in these townships already had a cost of living higher than any other black area in the country, according to a university study.

Black grievances relating to the educational system also stimulated much of the unrest in 1984. Black pupils last year publicly demanded elected student representative councils, a ban on corporal punishment, and the revocation of a regulation that bars over-age pupils who fail exams from returning to secondary schools. Blacks also protested over the relative inferiority of their teachers and schools. A government spokesman stated in Parliament last year that the per capita expenditure for white students was eight times higher than for black pupils. Moreover, a detailed press study in 1984 reported that 80 percent of teachers in black schools are underqualified or completely unqualified.



Cycle of Violence. Young blacks taunt police outside the cemetery in Sharpeville following the funeral of a victim of riots last October. Shortly after this picture was taken, police dispersed the crowd, killing one black and injuring several others.

Underlying Causes

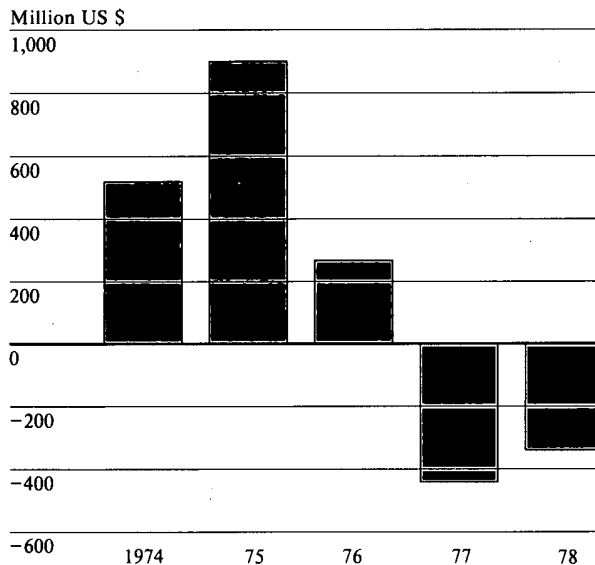
Black political frustrations underlie and will continue to provoke spontaneous violence. Even though the campaign against South Africa's new constitution last year did not itself spark major violent antigovernment protests, we believe it raised the political consciousness of blacks and increased the chances that local grievances over issues like rent hikes would explode into violence. The low voter turnout in local black elections in 32 townships in late 1983 was a strong indicator of the lack of support for the government's black town council system. Many township residents view local black politicians as sellouts to the white government, according to polls. Their unpopularity was dramatically underscored last September and October when five local black councilors were brutally murdered by angry township residents, and scores of homes and businesses belonging to other local black politicians were attacked.

Black youths, who represent a high percentage of the urban black populace and face an unemployment rate of at least 30 percent, have been the main participants during major periods of spontaneous violence in the

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Figure 2
South Africa: Net Private Foreign
Capital Flows, 1974-78



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Impact on Whites

The most important difference between the recent unrest and the riots in 1976-77 is, in our judgment, the change in white perceptions about the implications of black spontaneous violence. In 1976 many whites regarded the outbreak of the riots as the beginning of a bloody racial war that would end in black majority rule, according to academic researchers. Immigration figures reflected the level of white concern: in 1975 there was a net gain of some 40,000 whites in South Africa; two years later, there was a net loss of more than 1,000, despite a steady flow of new arrivals who had fled the guerrilla war in Rhodesia. Moreover, the second half of 1976 was a boom period for gun dealers in South Africa as frightened whites rushed to buy handguns and rifles. White vigilantes grew in number as the government publicly encouraged civilians to take steps to guard their lives and property. []

White businessmen especially were concerned with the course of events in 1976-77. The riots immediately contributed to a loss of investor confidence and a subsequent net outflow of private foreign capital in South Africa. Combined with falling gold prices, this led to a major economic crisis. In addition, many local businesses fell victim to a series of general strikes orchestrated by black groups, leading many Afrikaner businessmen to begin to question whether the regime's apartheid system was counterproductive, according to press reports. []

last few decades. According to a press report in early October 1984, local lawyers stated that the majority of the more than 2,000 blacks arrested since the outbreak of violence a month earlier were under the age of 18, which is the median age for all South African blacks. Last fall, the South African press published numerous accounts of motorists who were attacked and robbed in black townships by gangs of armed youths. []

On occasion, violence in South Africa's black townships focused against the government leads to violence within the nonwhite community itself. The US Embassy reports that many blacks took advantage of the chaos in the townships last year to settle personal scores with fellow residents. Moreover, many Indian homes and businesses were attacked in September and October 1984 because Indians generally are resented by urban blacks for being a relatively privileged nonwhite group. []

In stark contrast, the US Embassy reported in late November that whites were generally complacent about the continuing unrest and there was no sign of capital flight, which we believe was for the following reasons:

- The 1976 upheaval and the ANC's urban bombing campaign that began in earnest in 1981 clearly has raised the threshold for white concern about black violence. South African whites apparently have become accustomed to higher levels of violence. Moreover, in terms of casualties, the earlier period was more violent: over 600 blacks died during the riots in 1976-77, about three and a half times more than in 1984.

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- Whites had expected that black opposition to the Colored and Indian elections for the new Parliament last August would lead to riots in the townships, according to the US Embassy. Instead, they were relieved as the elections themselves passed with few deaths, and that the trigger for more serious riots that followed was more apolitical (rent increases).
- The government also muted local reporting on the recent disturbances, which were largely confined to black townships outside the daily purview of the vast majority of whites. []

Despite the evidently more sanguine reactions of whites to the 1984 violence, the recent unrest was expensive to the government in monetary and political terms. Attacks by angry protestors against community property in the black townships south of Johannesburg amounted to some \$9 million in damages, according to public government estimates last fall. Paying for the government's massive security operations probably hit harder than usual because of Pretoria's continuing economic difficulties.⁶ The most severe rioting also coincided with the implementation of the government's new Constitution and spoiled its debut. The international media provided widespread coverage of the riots and generally pointed to them as evidence of black anger at being excluded from the new political system. In addition, the violence forced President Botha to postpone or cancel a planned trip to a number of black African states intended to improve Pretoria's relations with them. []

Prospects for Black Protest

Organized Activity

Black protest groups, in our view, will be unable to force the government to depart radically from its program of gradual racial reform. We believe that the factors that have worked to fragment the black protest movement are more powerful than the incentives to unite against a common opponent. Nevertheless, activity by black protest groups will continue to flourish in South Africa, significantly influencing international perceptions of Pretoria. []

In our judgment, black protest campaigns have been most costly to Pretoria when they trigger heavyhanded security responses that offend the international community and energize antiapartheid groups worldwide. Even though the increasingly image-conscious regime recognizes the international political costs of harassing black protest groups, domestic political imperatives—namely, reassuring the white minority and forestalling political threats from the Afrikaner right wing—ensure that major black protest activities will invariably provoke a strong government reaction. Thus, even though the organized black protests may not themselves prompt specific changes in policy, they create a heightened atmosphere in which international pressure or spontaneous violence can affect government policy. For example, the general strike last November inspired a higher level of antiapartheid activity by groups in the United States and Europe. This activity encouraged Western governments to adopt a stronger public stance against apartheid, which we believe in turn influenced Pretoria's decision to release numerous political detainees last December. []

We expect that the UDF will retain its status as the most important nonwhite, antigovernment political group in South Africa. We also believe that it will strive to improve its relations with key black labor groups by organizing more joint protest efforts like the general strike last November. The black consciousness movement will become increasingly fractious, in our view, as some of its groups move toward excluding Indians and Coloreds, while others that already have white members move toward merging with their more influential charterist rivals. []

Labor. The leverage of the black labor movement will continue to grow as its membership expands. At present, however, less than 15 percent of the black work force outside of agriculture, domestic service, and the public sector is unionized, according to press reports. Despite the participation of black labor federations in the general strike last November, we believe that their leaders probably have recognized the pitfalls of antigovernment politics and will tend to favor tactics that are less confrontational. []

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In the near term, the attitudes of key black labor groups toward the government will depend in part on the viability of Pretoria's industrial court system, which was set up in 1979 to settle disputes between employers and unions. After getting off to a slow start, the industrial court has played an increasingly important role in industrial relations in South Africa, which is reflected in annual increases in the number of cases referred to the court. However, the court recently has come under attack from black unions that have charged it with being strongly biased toward employers in disputes involving allegations of unfair labor practices, according to press reports. A boycott of the industrial court by registered black unions would be a major setback to Pretoria's efforts to corral organized black labor into a government-controlled system of conflict resolution. []

economic and political problems that prompted the unrest in 1984, more outbreaks of violence in the black townships are highly likely. South Africa's economic problems—continuing inflation, depressed gold prices, a third year of drought, anticipated marginal economic growth—probably will severely constrain any government efforts in the near future to tackle the issues that concern urban blacks the most. Black townships will remain tinderboxes as long as their residents continue to be affected by overcrowding, extremely high unemployment rates, inadequate incomes, and soaring costs of living. []

On other key black grievances, the government is likely to devote more resources to improving black education, but not enough to defuse tensions in the black schools. Although expenditures on black education are rising twice as fast as those for white schools, the gap is still wide and total parity between black and white education is likely to remain an illusive goal for the next decade. Meanwhile, leading black student activists are predicting publicly that the student unrest in 1984 will continue after schools reopen in January 1985 following the South African summer recess. []

The ANC. Government countermeasures will continue to prevent the ANC from transforming its immense popularity among South African blacks into active support in the townships, a necessary condition, we believe, if the group is to become a serious military threat to the government. However, the recent unrest in South Africa may swell the ANC's membership: its military wing gained thousands of new members when young blacks fled the country during the unrest in 1976-77, and there were large increases in the number of black South African refugees entering Botswana during the riots last fall, according to the US Embassy. []

Despite its deteriorating position in the region, we believe the ANC will be able to maintain a campaign of sporadic bombings in South Africa. The frequency of its attacks—about three per month in recent years—is likely to decline, however, because of the logistic problems confronting the group's military wing since its expulsion from Mozambique last year. []

[] The ANC, in our view, may compensate by attempting attacks that are more spectacular, such as the car bombing in front of South African Air Force Headquarters in Pretoria in May 1983 that killed 19 and wounded over 200. []

Prospects for Violence

Since we believe that the government will be unable in the next five years to redress the wide range of

While the stimuli for sporadic violence in the townships remain strong, the near collapse of Pretoria's system of local government in many black townships has added to their instability. The turmoil has been prompted by the resignations and assassinations of black councilors during the recent unrest. Moreover, the disturbances this fall have worsened the already dismal financial position of most of the town councils.⁷ The government indicated last month that it will rely on new taxes to shore up the town councils, but they are likely to remain in disarray for some time. All black town councils now in existence have been given the authority to establish their own police forces, according to a government announcement last October. We believe that, although the move was designed in part to protect local black officials and state-owned property in the black townships from attacks by angry residents, it may backfire by prompting even more attacks. []

⁷ For example, the residents of the black townships south of Johannesburg have refused to pay any rent since the increases last fall, according to public statements by the local town council last December. []

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Even as the government moves forward with its program of gradual racial reform, as we believe likely, it undoubtedly will meet with some black resistance in the form of violent protests. Blacks are likely to reject most white concessions automatically as long as Pretoria holds fast to its traditional method of imposing changes on the black community without adequate prior consultation. The government clearly is aware of this and has publicly announced its intentions to confer with black leaders to find alternative and appropriate political structures that are acceptable to blacks.

Serious negotiations with black leaders are unlikely, however, primarily because the National Party, in our view, prefers to maintain absolute control over the rate and direction of racial reform to allay white fears. Government discussions in 1984 with black homeland leaders on new political structures generally were dominated by Pretoria, which set the agendas and the parameters of the talks, according to US Embassy reports. Moreover, the symbolic political gestures that Pretoria appears willing to make to convince other black leaders to participate in similar talks probably will not persuade the most influential blacks to risk losing their credibility by associating with the government.

The security forces, in our judgment, probably will prevent black violence from threatening the stability of the regime. However, while the security forces are adept at stamping out flareups in the townships, they cannot prevent them from recurring. Moreover, the violence that has been endemic to black urban areas may soon spread to black rural areas as well because of the government's continuing efforts to move large numbers of blacks from "white" areas to the homelands. Academic researchers have reported recent dramatic increases in the level of resentment and resistance among blacks in rural homeland areas as a result of soaring unemployment, severe overcrowding, malnutrition, and a lack of arable land.

If black unrest should spill over into white areas of the country resulting in significant numbers of casualties among white civilians—a development that we judge is possible but unlikely—Botha's response probably would be a mix of tough security measures and concessions to blacks in an attempt to defuse the

violence. His exact response would depend on which segments of the black community and which issues were involved, but any groups and individuals who perpetrated or inspired violence, regardless of their background, would be dealt with severely to deter a general insurrection:

- Major school-related disturbances are likely to result in school closures, the detention of leaders, the harassment of student groups, swift security action against violent student demonstrations, and the meeting of some student demands.
- Large-scale upheavals involving workers probably would lead to mass dismissals of laborers and vigorous efforts by the government to intimidate or eradicate any unions involved and to mollify the remainder of the nonwhite work force with increased economic incentives.
- Widespread unorganized black violence precipitated by soaring levels of general economic and political discontent and characterized by random attacks against whites probably would be the most serious threat to Botha. Under this circumstance, the government would be likely to maximize its security responses, including mobilizing Army and police reserves, as well as promising far-reaching concessions, possibly including an offer to blacks of some form of political power sharing.

If Botha's approach to curbing unrest failed, it probably would spark a crisis in the ruling National Party, prompting many NP members of Parliament to defect to the rightwing Conservative Party (CP). President Botha and his program of gradual racial reform, which is designed in part to prevent a black revolution from occurring, probably would be replaced. Either a more rightwing NP leadership or a government led by the CP would come to power and return to a domestic policy of harshly enforced separate development reminiscent of South Africa during the 1960s.

We believe Pretoria must continue to provide some hope for blacks in terms of their political and economic future if South Africa is to avoid a racial civil war.

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Soviet Inroads to Black South Africa

The outlawed ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) are the principal bridges between Moscow and black South Africans. The strongly pro-Soviet, semisecret SACP has a long history of ties to the ANC, the most popular antigovernment group among South African blacks, according to various polls. The two groups openly describe their relationship as an "alliance." Communists, including some whites, are well represented in the ANC's leadership and exert considerable influence, especially over military strategy. The ANC is heavily dependent on Soviet Bloc military aid, which is an important source of leverage for the SACP.

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The main vehicle for SACP entry into the black labor movement is the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), based in Lusaka, Zambia. Founded in 1954, SACTU today operates in self-imposed exile and acts, in our view, as the labor arm of the SACP and ANC. The president of SACTU, Stephen Dlamini, is an SACP member, and SACP and ANC literature in recent years has vigorously promoted SACTU as a key organization in the black labor movement. On balance, however, neither the ANC nor the SACP has had any substantial success so far in achieving direct influence in the black trade unions, according to the US Embassy. Union leaders, for their part, are highly sensitive to the dangers that explicit connections of this sort would pose to the survival of individual unions.

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If Botha's program suddenly was scrapped and retrogressive racial policies were broadly adopted, a revolutionary situation could develop in the black townships that would play into the hands of the African National Congress and its Soviet Bloc supporters.⁸

Implications for the United States

Although the current level of protests by blacks in South Africa will have little direct impact on the

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racial reform policies of the Botha government, they will ensure that the racial problems of South Africa will continue to have an impact on the United States, both domestically and in the foreign policy area. Violent protests create pressure on Washington to adopt tougher policies and restrictive legislation toward South Africa. They also result in intensified pressure on the majority of the more than 300 US companies doing business in South Africa to divest themselves of their South African holdings.

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A more tangible implication for the United States would materialize if the ANC begins to focus its attacks on foreign firms in South Africa. These attacks, combined with the growing disinvestment efforts of antiapartheid groups in Europe and the United States, probably would turn away some potential investors and persuade other firms already in South Africa to pull out.⁹ The ANC strongly favors an end to foreign investment in South Africa and recently has threatened to attack some Western firms in the country that the group claims have become part of Pretoria's security infrastructure because they have adopted extensive antiterrorist measures. Moreover, it already has bombed several oil facilities in South Africa owned in whole or in part by Western firms.

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Major protests by blacks in South Africa probably would further complicate Washington's relations with other African states, many of which believe the United States has considerable leverage over the South African Government. Racial unrest in South Africa usually prompts antiapartheid actions in the United Nations and other international forums that often include critical references to the United States.

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Increased domestic unrest in South Africa would make it more difficult for the United States to maintain its momentum in encouraging detente between Pretoria and black states in the region. Most of the leaders of the Frontline States are torn between their revulsion of apartheid and their fear of South

⁹ At the very least, the interest rates on external loans to businesses in South Africa probably would increase.

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African economic or military retribution. We believe that they always will be extremely tentative about expanding ties with Pretoria and that they will be especially reluctant to do so during periods of severe unrest in South Africa's black townships.

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